



State of Connecticut

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES STATE CAPITOL

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*Testimony by Representative Mitch Bolinsky
Before the Transportation Committee
Supporting House Bill 5940
February 23, 2015*

My thanks to the Honorable Co-Chairs, Senator Maynard and Representative Guerrero; Ranking Members Senator Boucher and Representative O'Dea; as well as the entire Transportation Committee for your consideration today of HB 5940, AN ACT CONCERNING SIGNS PROHIBITING "JAKE-BRAKING".

The intent of this legislation is to provide the Department of Transportation with an option to alleviate a noise and vibration problem for state residents. This is not a request for a mandate, only an option to alleviate some of this problem by allowing the placement of yellow, warning signs that display a message such as "No Jake-Braking – Residential Area", "Residential Area - Do Not Engine Brake" or some other equivalent message in downhill stretches of interstate or state highways where the roadway is in close proximity to densely-settled neighborhoods and where over-the-road trucks have historically employed such intrusive, noisy engine braking methods.

As you know, "Jake Braking" is a common transportation term for the use of a supplemental brake retarder or "engine-brake" to slow trucks without or before actuation of their primary air-brake systems. I understand the effectiveness and safety aspect of these systems, when used properly. But they should also be used considerately.

When in use, a brake retarder makes a distinctive staccato sound, which can be quite loud and accompanied by heavy compression-wave vibrations. As a result of this noise and vibration, many residents in my district have contacted me with concerns about discouraging unnecessary use of these systems, especially during the morning and evening hours, when their use is likely to negatively affect residents' sleep and quality of life.

Placement of yellow, warning signs, as described earlier in downhill stretches of interstate or state highways, where, as determined by DOT, residents and municipal representatives, they're agreed upon to be an appropriate solution to this problem, is appropriate. They are in-use in other states but not in Connecticut. (NY, MA, PA, OH)

DOT Commissioner Redeker, although sympathetic to our residents' concerns, has informed me in the past that, under current statutes, his department is not legally authorized to post such signs. However, he has expressed a willingness to consider doing so in places where there is a demonstrated need, if we in the legislature were to pass an act giving DOT the statutory authority to do so. HB-5940 is a bill to do this and hopefully provide some measure of sound control and quality of life improvement residents all around our great state.

Thank you for your time and should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact my office.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "MB", written over a horizontal line.

Representative Mitch Bolinsky